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Blast From the Past: Ratzinger & Habermas

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 12, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

Earlier today, I quoted from the public discussion then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had with Jurgen Habermas.

Here is another quote from that same event. I am especially struck by his invocation of the Church Fathers.

Too often, mainstream views of religion think everything before the Enlightenment was dark and bestial, but that is a mis-characterization of history. The Enlightenment followed, and was in part spawned by, the Renaissance which, like the ressourcement theology that shaped Vatican II, involved a retrieval of wisdom from the past.

From the future pope:

> We have seen that there exist pathologies in religion that are extremely dangerous and that make it necessary to see the divine light of reason as a 'controlling organ.' Religion must continually allow itself to be purified and structured by reason; and this was the view of the Church Fathers, too. However, we have also seen in the course of our reflections that there are also patholigies of reason, although mankind in general is not as conscious of this fact today. There is a hubris of reason that is no less dangerous. Indeed, bearing in mind its potential effects, it poses an even greater threat - it suffices here to think of the atomic bomb or of man as a 'product.' This is why reason, too, must be warned to keep within its proper limits, and it must learn a willingness to listen to the great religious traditions of mankind. If it cuts itself completely adrift and rejects this willingness to learn, this relatedness, reason becomes destructive.

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